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One Hundred Fifteenth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Foreign Affairs
2170 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
www.foreignaffairs.house.gov

January 27, 2017

The President
The White House
Washington, DC

Dear Mr. President:

This morning, your advisor Kellyanne Conway said in an interview that lifting sanctions on Russia is “under consideration” as you prepare to speak with President Putin on Saturday. Such an action would be a catastrophic misstep. I strongly urge you not to take any action that would reduce pressure on Russia until Mr. Putin ceases his destabilizing policies of sowing violence and chaos beyond Russia's borders.

Mr. Putin's hostile actions and rhetoric risk the decades of American efforts to secure a Europe that is whole, free, and at peace. His aggression has cost tens of thousands of lives and brought war to Europe. Our sanctions regime may not have reversed Russia's gains, but it has imposed a price upon the Kremlin's military advance toward our allies in Europe. And our resolve in confronting this threat has reassured our largest trading partners on the Continent. Premature sanctions relief on Russia would signal a dangerous and provocative weakness on our part and jeopardize other sanctions programs that the United States uses to promote our national interests.

Congress has advanced stronger measures to deter Russia's aggression and strengthen the position of the United States while keeping the door open to cooperation where advisable or necessary. Yet, until Russia halts its aggression and reverses its illegal occupation, I strongly urge you to maintain American sanctions on Russia.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Eliot L. Engel". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Eliot" and last name "Engel" clearly legible.

ELIOT L. ENGEL
Ranking Member